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ABSTRACT

Potential indicators of organizational effectiveness and ineffectiveness in postsecondary institutions were investigated. Institutional effectiveness was defined as the possession of characteristics of excellence, including: student educational satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, student personal development, faculty and administrator employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of the faculty, systems openness and community interaction, ability to acquire resources, and organizational health. Institutional ineffectiveness was defined as the creation of harm or the possession of weakness or faults. The study sample consisted of 23 four-year institutions which had previously been studied and assigned effectiveness scores. Indicators of ineffectiveness were derived from interview with 32 administrators and faculty. Findings suggested the independence of the construct of organizational ineffectiveness from that of organizational effectiveness. An inter- and intra-institutional comparative framework was developed that highlighted the independence of the two constructs. The framework also challenged the normal assumptions by indicating the presence in some institutions of both high effectiveness and high ineffectiveness. Five references are included. (SW)

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PHILIP JONES

OCTOBER, 1987

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT
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ORGANIZATIONAL INEFFECTIVENESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

PHILIP JONES

OCTOBER, 1987

ABSTRACT

In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the construct of organizational ineffectiveness, an instrument was designed to measure potential indicators within postsecondary educational institutions. The results of the study indicated the independence of the construct of organizational ineffectiveness from that of organizational effectiveness, and enabled an inter- and intra-institutional comparative framework to be developed. This framework further highlighted the independence of the two constructs and challenged the normal assumptions by indicating the presence in some institutions of both high effectiveness and high ineffectiveness.

Theoretical Framework:

While organizational effectiveness has been the focus of much research, little common agreement has been possible. This is because there are no specified boundaries to the construct of organizational effectiveness and it is, therefore, impossible to construct a model which encompasses all the relevant criteria. This general absence of common criteria has hindered comparative research into organizational effectiveness (Campbell, 1973). The criteria themselves are the subject of disagreement, being founded in the preferences and values of individuals and seemingly varying in their relevance across time and institutional circumstances. As Fincher (1987) describes it, "each institution has its own pattern of institutional characteristics, and the determinants of institutional effectiveness, whatever they might be, may indeed be institution-specific." (P.110)

To date, all the literature which has addressed the measurement of institutional effectiveness, program quality, or reputational rating has been concerned exclusively with the examination of positive characteristics or criteria. While this is a valid approach, it has been argued (Cameron, 1978, 1984, 1986) that another important organizational variable exists: organizational ineffectiveness. It has been suggested (Cameron, 1984) that it is easier for

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individuals to agree on criteria of ineffectiveness than criteria of effectiveness and that these criteria of ineffectiveness are qualitatively different from the criteria of effectiveness. This study represents the first attempt to assess both the positive and negative characteristics of organizations.

At the outset, the researchers were no more aware than anyone else what "ineffectiveness" was, or what criteria best identified it. Two approaches were possible: hypotheses could be formulated based upon the effectiveness literature and the intution of the researchers; or the insights of knowledgeable experts could be sought. The latter approach was adopted for this study.

Thirty two senior faculty members and administrators at The University of Michigan were interviewed, and asked to identify the institutional characteristics which they would associate with ineffectiveness. Open ended questions were used, such as: "What institutional characteristics would indicate ineffectiveness to you?"; "How would you know they were ineffective?"; "How would you measure them?" It was discovered that these faculty and administrators frequently identified similar criteria. These included problems related to students; litigation; campus discipline; budget allocations; and the library. Student problems covered graduation rates; average indebtedness; employability; and academic probation. Litiginous problems addressed the use made of grievance procedures; and formal lawsuits involving the institution. Campus discipline problems were associated with violation of codes of conduct; felonies; and malicious damage. Budget allocation problems focused upon faculty development; faculty salaries; repair and replacement of equipment and property; and payment for municipal services. Library problems included the accessibility of the library to students; and the degree to which stacks are "open" or "closed"

Since ineffectiveness had not previously been studied, it was not possible to know whether it simply represented an absence of effectiveness, or whether ineffectiveness was actually an entirely independent construct. From the interviews with faculty and administrators, broad definitions of the criteria of ineffectiveness were derived. The method employed here was similar to that used previously in studies of effectiveness (Cameron, 1978, 1984). However, the criteria of ineffectiveness identified by the faculty and administrators were not the same as the criteria of effectiveness identified in the previous studies. This study therefore sought to address two important research questions:

1/ What are the criteria of ineffectiveness?

2/ Does a relationship exist between effectiveness and ineffectiveness, or are the two constructs independent of each other?

With these questions in mind, this exploratory study sought to identify the characteristics of fault, harm, or weakness which may exist alongside the characteristics of excellence or quality. While effectiveness studies seek to identify quality and excellence, this study adopted the reverse approach. It was assumed that the presence of ineffectiveness (defined as creating harm, possessing weakness or faults) was not simply an absence of effectiveness (defined as possessing characteristics of excellence). Rather, it was hypothesized that independent criteria exist that indicate the two conditions separately, and that organizations may vary uniquely on these criteria. Thus, an organization might be characterized by both high levels of effectiveness and ineffectiveness, or low levels of both. This framework is similar to that developed by Herzberg (1959) in the two-factor approach to motivation, which recognized the independence of "satisfiers" and "non-satisfiers".

A common assumption is that organizations perform along a single continuum ranging from high effectiveness on one end to high ineffectiveness (an absence of effectiveness) on the other. Yet it has been argued (Cameron, 1984, 1986) that organizational effectiveness is inherently paradoxical. The most excellent organizations are characterized by the presence of simultaneous opposite, even contradictory, attributes. One purpose for this investigation was to determine whether institutions exist which simultaneously represent both high effectiveness and ineffectiveness, or both low effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Some earlier evidence has suggested the existence of institutions that perform in this latter category (Cameron, 1984), but schools with high effectiveness and high ineffectiveness have not previously been identified. One question of particualr interest was whether organizations with the highest effectiveness scores also possessed the highest ineffectiveness scores.

For the purposes of this study, institutional effectiveness was defined as the possession of characteristics of excellence. Specifically, nine institutional effectiveness dimensions utilized in previous studies (Cameron, 1976; 1980; 1983) represented characteristics of excellence. These were: student educational satisfaction; student academic development; student career development; student personal development; faculty and administrator employment satisfaction; professional development and quality of the faculty; systems openess and community interaction; ability to acquire resources; and organizational health. These dimensions were developed in the same way as the dimensions of ineffectiveness described earlier: faculty and administrators were asked to identify characteristics of excellence; these were clustered and their validity reevaluated in follow-up interviews with the informants.

The dimensions used here were selected because they represented the most significant dimensions of effectiveness from the previous studies (Cameron 1976, 1980, 1983)

From the interviews with informed experts, it was possible to create a working definition of "institutional ineffectiveness". Institutional ineffectiveness was defined in this study as the creation of harm, or the possession of weakness or faults. It was also apparent from the interviews that the dimensions of ineffectiveness existed in two distinct categories in the perceptions of the informants: certain dimensions were related to weakness or ineffective service; while other dimensions were related to the production of harm. Indicators of harm included: student indebtedness at graduation; grievances filed by students, faculty, and staff; lawsuits against the institution; violations of the student or faculty code of conduct; involuntary terminations of faculty, staff, or administrators; felonies committed on campus; proportion of students on academic probation; and proportion of budget spent on damaged property repair. In their assessment of these "harm producing" dimensions, the informants proposed that the greater the incidence of the dimension, the greater the contribution to institutional ineffectivness: that is, "more" of one of these dimensions indicated greater ineffectiveness.

Indicators of ineffective service included: proportion of students employed on campus; proportion of students who graduate in five years; proportion of students who participate in orientation activities; proportion of graduates in gainful employment or post-baccalaureate education one year after graduation; proportion of students receiving needed financial aid; proportion of budget available for faculty and administrator professional development; size and accessibility of library; amount spent in reimbursement of municipal services; national percentile of faculty salaries; number of activities to enhance college-community relations. In contrast to "harm producing" dimensions, the informants maintained that institutional ineffectiveness was indicated by "ineffective service" dimensions inversely to their preponderance: that is, the less a particular dimension existed, the greater the ineffectiveness.

Methods:

This study utilized a sample of 29 4-year institutions from the North Eastern region of the country, whose effectiveness scores had been assessed using a common instrument in 1976, 1980, and 1983. Scores for individual institutions remained relatively stable over these three years, so that taken as a group, no statistically significant difference occured over time.

Data collection for this study was restricted to indicators of ineffectiveness, and these data were combined

with the earlier effectiveness data to allow inter- and intra-institutional comparisons. Since in the perceptions of informed experts the two constructs are independent, they were assessed separately. The instrument used to assess ineffectiveness was totally distinct from that used to assess effectiveness, and was generated from the independent criteria of independent faculty and administrators.

Indicators of ineffectiveness were derived from interviews with 32 institutional administrators and faculty members. From a list of over 100 potential indicators generated by the informants, many were eliminated because the data required to measure them is not collected by most institutions, or because the items indicated merely an absence of effectiveness characteristics, rather than the presence of ineffectivenss characteristics. After eliminating these "non-effective" items, and clustering the remaining items around the common themes which they shared, a list of 19 items remained. These items were utilized in the formation of a preliminary questionnaire which was used for pretest purposes..

The preliminary questionnaire was then distributed for pretesting to 12 college and university administrators and faculty members. Follow-up interviews were conducted with these informants in order to further refine the instrument. As a result of these interviews, one item was deleted from the questionnaire, and another added. After these revisions, the instrument contained 19 items in its final form.

Following the pretest of the instrument, the presidents of the 29 institutions for which we had effectiveness scores were contacted and their permission obtained to include the institution in the study. The questionnaire was then mailed to the institutional research officer at each participating institution. Follow-up telephone calls were made to answer questions and provide clarity about the data requested in the instrument. A second round of mailing and telephone calls followed three weeks after the initial mailing, and the final response rate among participating institutions was 79.3%.

Data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and discriminant analysis to test for significant differences among schools and to identify predictors of the different patterns of effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

Data Analysis:

Simple descriptive statistics were employed in this initaial analysis. Institutional responses for each item were rank ordered. Rank ordering, rather than the use of raw data, was necessary because responses to items were not all be of the same type: while some questions required percentages (e.g. graduation rates), others required absolute figures (e.g. average student indebtedness). The rank orderings were then summed for each institution, and institution rank means were calculated. Using these

institutional rank means, a rank ordering of institutions by mean ineffectiveness rank was created.

Effectiveness results from the 1976 Institutional Effectiveness study for those institutions included in this study were similarly ranked by mean effectiveness rank. This data was then combined with the institutional ineffectiveness data, and is presented below.(Table 1)

TABLE 1
OVERALL INEFFECTIVENESS RANK AND EFFECTIVENESS RANK

INSTITUTION ID	MEAN OF TOTAL INEFFECTIVENESS RANKS	OVERALL INEFFECT. RANK	OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS RANK
27	7.4	1	8
3	7.5	2	16
1	7.7	3	15
41	8.0	4	3
4	8.1	5	7
11	8.3	6	18
16	8.3	6	19
37	8.8	8	21
5	8.9	9	17
17	8.9	9	19
34	9.2	11	14
13	9.8	12	13
24	10.1	13	22
18	10.3	14	2
10	10.4	15	6
40	10.6	16	9
9	11.0	17	23
15	11.0	17	5
32	11.0	17	4
21	11.1	20	10
31	11.1	20	12
29	11.5	22	11
12	11.7	23	1

N.B. Institutions ranked from most ineffective to least.

Using the data in Table 1, coordinates were constructed for each institution: the overall ineffectiveness rank was used for the X-axis coordinate; and the overall effectiveness rank was used for the Y-axis coordinate. These coordinates were then plotted on a scattergram. The resulting plot is presented in Table 2.

The rank orderings for both Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Ineffectiveness were now divided into quartiles. Institutions with the highest overall ineffectiveness rank formed the top quartile for institutional ineffectiveness; institutions with the lowest

overall ineffectiveness rank formed the bottom quartile for institutional ineffectiveness. Institutions with the highest overall effectiveness rank formed the top quartile for institutional effectiveness; institutions with the lowest overall effectiveness rank formed the bottom quartile for institutional effectiveness. Those institutions falling in both the top or bottom quartiles of the ineffectiveness rankings and the top or bottom quartiles of the effectiveness rankings were now plotted on a 2X2 matrix. The results of this manipulation are shown in Table 3.

In accordance with the conceptualization provided by the faculty and administrator informants, the ineffectiveness data was now divided into two categories: dimensions of weakness, or ineffective service; and dimensions of harm. Data used to calculate dimensions of ineffective service, or weakness, included responses to questions concerning student attrition, employability, and orientation; library services; budget allocations; and community relations. Data used to calculate dimensions of harm included responses to questions concerning student indebtedness; litigation involving the institution; violation of codes of conduct; felonies and vandalism; and involuntary termination of employees.

Using this division of ineffectiveness dimensions, further matrices were plotted between effectiveness and weakness; and effectiveness and harm. These plots produced some noticeable differences from the initial matrix (Table 3) and are reproduced in Tables 4 and 5.

Results:

The results of the study indicated the existence of institutions reflecting all possible combinations of effectiveness and ineffectiveness. While some institutions fitted the normal assumptions of high effectiveness and low ineffectiveness, or low effectiveness and high ineffectiveness, others did not. Institutions were identified which displayed low effectiveness and low ineffectiveness, or high effectiveness and high ineffectiveness.

Table 2 indicates the independence of the concepts of institutional ineffectiveness and institutional effectiveness. If effectiveness and ineffectiveness were negatively correlated, or simply opposite ends of a continuum, institutions would be clustered from high effectiveness/low ineffectiveness (top left) to low effectiveness/high ineffectiveness (bottom left). Conversely, if effectiveness and ineffectiveness were positively correlated, or simply opposite ends of a continuum, they would be clustered from high effectiveness/high ineffectiveness (bottom left) to low effectiveness/low ineffectiveness (top right). The dispersion pattern in Table 2 indicates that neither situation pertains, and that the two dimensions of

institutional ineffectiveness and institutional effectiveness are indeed independent.

The matrix in Table 3 further supports the assertion that institutional ineffectiveness and institutional effectiveness are independent concepts. Institutions were identified which displayed all possible combinations of effectiveness and ineffectiveness (high/high; high/low; low/high; low/low). While the normal assumption of negative correlation would lead one to expect to find only "high/low" or "low/high" combinations of effectiveness and ineffectiveness, there are institutions which appear not to meet this expectation.

Important differences were discovered between institutions when the dimensions of ineffectiveness were divided into the two categories: dimensions of weakness or ineffective service; and dimensions of harm. The dimensions of weakness or ineffective service were found to concur with the normal assumption. High levels of effectiveness were found to be associated with low levels of weakness or ineffective service; and low levels of effectiveness were associated with high levels of weakness or ineffective service. This relationship is demonstrated in Table 4.

However, when overall effectiveness and dimensions of harm were compared, it was found that several institutions could be identified which reflected the opposite of the normal assumption. Institutions were identified which displayed high levels of effectiveness and high levels of harm; and low levels of effectiveness and low levels of harm. These findings are presented in Table 5. No institutions were identified which reflected high effectiveness and low harm, and only one institution was found which possessed both low effectiveness and high harm: yet, if the normal assumption were correct, one would anticipate that institutions in these cells would outnumber those in the other two cells of the matrix.

Conclusions:

This research would seem to have identified the independence of the concepts of institutional effectiveness and institutional ineffectiveness. Moreover, the results indicate that the normal assumption of the existence of a negative correlation between institutional effectiveness and institutional ineffectiveness may not be valid.

From the analysis of various dimensions of institutional ineffectiveness, it appears that certain dimensions may be highly negatively correlated with institutional effectiveness, and thus meet the normal assumption. These are dimensions of weakness or ineffective service. However, other dimensions, dimensions of harm, appear to be positively correlated with institutional effectiveness, in contradiction of the normal assumption.

Importance of the Study and Further Research:

This research assessed the nature and extent of organizational ineffectiveness in postsecondary educational institutions, and facilitated the construction of an inter- and intra-institutional comparative framework of effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

The study is important for two reasons. First, it challenges the basis for the normal assumption that high effectiveness is the same as an absence of ineffectiveness, and that high ineffectiveness is merely an absence of effectiveness. The independence of these two constructs is highlighted by this research, and in particular the existence of high effectiveness alongside high ineffectiveness represents a new finding.

Second, the study represents the first systematic attempt to identify and measure the indicators of institutional ineffectiveness.

These results are currently being utilized in further research into the indicators of organizational ineffectiveness. Specifically, the predictive capacity of each indicator is being evaluated, and the merits of various institutional management practices in addressing different dimensions of institutional ineffectiveness are being assessed.

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TABLE 2: OVERALL INEFFECTIVENESS BY OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

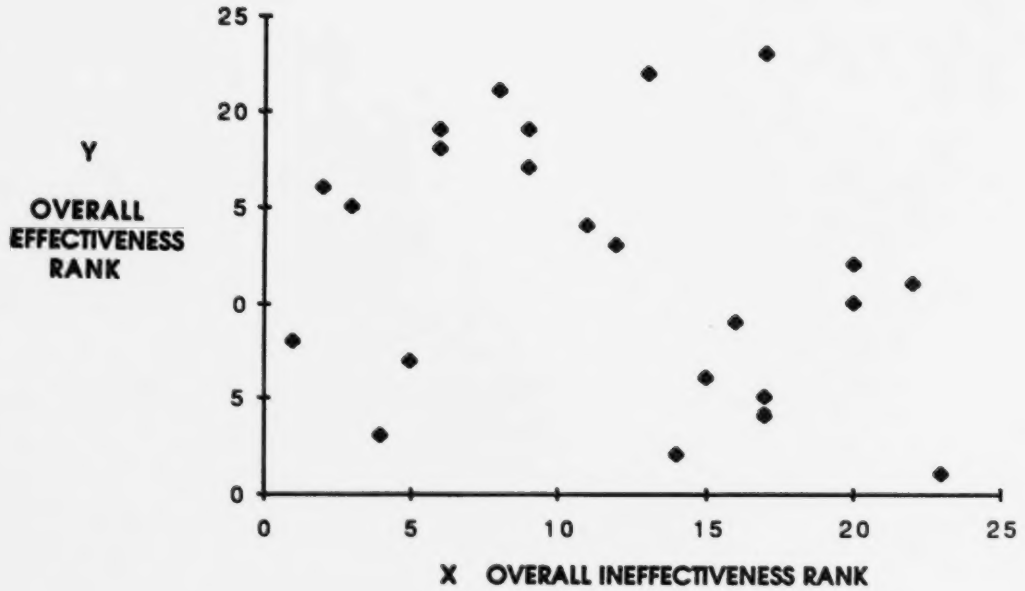

TABLE 3: OVERALL INEFFECTIVENESS BY OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

INEFFECTIVENESS \ EFFECTIVENESS	TOP QUARTILE	BOTTOM QUARTILE
TOP QUARTILE	41 (4, 3)	11 (6, 18) 16 (6, 19)
BOTTOM QUARTILE	12 (23, 1)	9 (17, 23)

TABLE 4: DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE BY OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE	EFFECTIVENESS: TOP QUARTILE	EFFECTIVENESS: BOTTOM QUARTILE
TOP QUARTILE		11 (3, 18) 16 (2, 19)
BOTTOM QUARTILE	32 (19, 4) 15 (20, 5) 10 (21, 6) 12 (22, 1) 18 (23, 2)	

TABLE 5: DIMENSIONS OF HARM BY OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

DIMENSIONS OF HARM	EFFECTIVENESS: TOP QUARTILE	EFFECTIVENESS: BOTTOM QUARTILE
TOP QUARTILE	41 (1, 3) 18 (4, 2)	37 (2, 21)
BOTTOM QUARTILE		24 (20, 22) 9 (21, 23) 29 (22, 18)